

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) An image forming apparatus comprising:
a first contacting unit including a positioning member which is contacted with respect to an image carrier along a predetermined weight direction; and
a second contacting unit which is contacted with respect to the image carrier in a wrap shape, wherein
the predetermined weight direction by the first contacting unit is intersected with the wrap-shaped contact range by the second contacting unit.
2. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein
the second contacting unit is provided on the downstream side of a pivotal rotation direction of the image carrier with respect to the first contacting unit.
3. (Currently Amended) The image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein
the first contacting unit is a member capable of maintaining a distance between the image carrier and a developing agent carrier for developing ~~an elastic~~ a latent image formed on the image carrier.

4. (Currently Amended) The image forming apparatus according to claim 3, wherein
the first contacting unit is provided in a developing device in which a plurality of the
developing agent carriers are provided on a circumference thereof, and the positioning member is
a tracking member capable of maintaining the distance between a specific developing agent
carrier and the image carrier when the developing device is pivotally rotated and thus the specific
developing agent carrier is located opposite to the image carrier.
5. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein
the second contacting unit is an elastic belt which is followed by receiving driving force
produced from the image carrier.
6. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 5, wherein
the second contacting unit is contacted to the image carrier under predetermined
depression force.
7. (Currently Amended) The image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein
the second contacting unit is an intermediate transfer member which temporarily holds
thereon a toner image formed on the image carrier by [[the]] a developing agent carrier.
8. (Original) An image forming apparatus comprising:
an image carrier;

a developing device for developing an electrostatic latent image formed on the image carrier; and

an intermediate transfer member for abutting against the image carrier so as to temporarily hold thereon a toner image formed by being developed by the developing device, wherein

the developing device is comprised of a positioning member which abuts against the image carrier, and a weight direction by the positioning member to the image carrier is located within an abutting range between the intermediate transfer member and the image carrier.

9. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 8, wherein

the intermediate transfer member is made of an elastic belt, and abuts with respect to the image carrier under such a condition that the image carrier is wrapped only over a predetermined range by the intermediate transfer member.

10. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 9, wherein

the intermediate transfer member is followed by receiving driving force produced from the image carrier.

11. (Original) The image forming apparatus as claimed in claim 8, wherein
the developing device holds a plurality of developing agent carriers along a
circumferential direction thereof, and is pivotally rotated in such a manner that a desirable
developing agent carrier among the plural developing agent carriers is transported to a
developing position located opposite to the image carrier.
12. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 11, wherein
the positioning member employed in the developing device is a tracking member capable
of maintaining an interval between each of the developing agent carriers and the image carrier in
a constant value.
13. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 8, wherein
the image carrier is a photosensitive drum having an axial center.
14. (Currently Amended) An image forming apparatus comprising:
an image carrier;
a developing device for developing an electrostatic latent image formed on the image
carrier, and being contacted to the image carrier by a positioning member in predetermined
weight; and
an intermediate transfer member which is contacted to the image carrier in predetermined
weight and holds thereon a toner image which has been developed to be formed by the
developing device, wherein

the image forming apparatus ~~owns~~ includes such a portion that both a straight line and a weight direction of the ~~developing device~~ positioning member with respect to the image carrier become a substantially straight line, while the straight line connects a contact point of the intermediate transfer member to the image carrier to a center of the image carrier.

15. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 14, wherein
an eccentricity of the image carrier is suppressed by both the intermediate transfer member and the developing device.

16. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 14, wherein
the intermediate transfer member is made of an elastic belt, and is contacted to the image carrier via either a line or a plane.

17. (Currently Amended) The image forming apparatus according to claim 14, wherein
the developing device is contacted to the image carrier at a preselected portion in order to keep a distance of ~~the own~~ a portion of the developing device located opposite to the image carrier constant.

18. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 17, wherein
the developing device is contacted to the image carrier at a non-image forming portion, and contacted toward a substantially center direction of the image carrier in predetermined weight.

19. (Currently Amended) An image forming apparatus comprising:

an electrostatic latent image forming unit for forming an electrostatic latent image on an image carrier;

a developing unit in which a plurality of developing rollers are provided along a circumferential direction thereof in order to develop the electrostatic latent image formed by the electrostatic latent image forming unit to thereby form a toner image, and a desirable developing roller is transported to a developing position located opposite to the image carrier; and

a transferring unit which abuts against the image carrier in a wrap shape, and temporarily holds thereon the toner image formed on the image carrier, wherein

an extension of a line which connects a center of the image carrier to a center of the desirable developing roller located opposite to the image carrier is positioned within a range where the transferring unit abuts against the image carrier in a wrap shape;

wherein the developing unit employs a member capable of maintaining an interval between the developing roller and the image carrier in a constant value in correspondence with each of the developing rollers.

20. (Canceled)

21. (Currently Amended) The image forming apparatus according to claim [[20]] 19,

wherein

the member employed in the developing unit depresses the image carrier along a predetermined direction when positioning of the developing ~~agent carrier~~ roller for executing the developing operation is carried out with respect to the image carrier.

22. (Original) An image forming apparatus comprising:

an electrostatic latent image forming unit for forming an electrostatic latent image on an image carrier;

a developing unit in which a plurality of developing agent carriers are provided along a circumferential direction thereof in order to develop the electrostatic latent image formed by the electrostatic latent image forming unit to thereby form a toner image, and a desirable developing agent carrier is pivotally rotated to a developing position located opposite to the image carrier; and

a transferring unit which abuts against the image carrier in a wrap shape, and temporarily holds thereon the toner image formed on the image carrier, wherein

in the developing unit, when the desirable developing agent carrier is pivotally rotated to the developing position, a predetermined member abuts against the image carrier via a predetermined trail; and a direction along which the predetermined member depresses the image carrier via the trail is located within a range where the transferring unit abuts against the image carrier in a wrap shape.

23. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 22, wherein
the predetermined member is a tracking roller which abuts against the image carrier
within a non-developing range, and determines an interval between the image carrier and the
developing agent carrier.
24. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 22, wherein
the predetermined member is provided in correspondence with all of the developing agent
carriers provided in the developing unit; and when each of the developing agent carriers is
located opposite to the image carrier, a direction along which the predetermined member
depresses against the image carrier is located within the range where the transferring unit abuts
against the image carrier in the wrap shape.
25. (Original) An image forming apparatus comprising:
an electrostatic latent image forming unit for forming an electrostatic latent image on an
image carrier;
a developing unit in which a plurality of developing agent carriers are provided along a
circumferential direction thereof in order to develop the electrostatic latent image formed by the
electrostatic latent image forming unit to thereby form a toner image, and a desirable developing
agent carrier is pivotally rotated to a developing position located opposite to the image carrier;
and

a transferring unit which abuts against the image carrier in a wrap shape, and temporarily holds thereon the toner image formed on the image carrier, wherein

in the developing unit, when the desirable developing agent carrier is separated from the developing position, a predetermined member is separated from the image carrier via a predetermined trail; and a direction along which the predetermined member depresses the image carrier via the trail is located within a range where the transferring unit abuts against the image carrier in a wrap shape.

26. (Currently Amended) A method of holding an image carrier comprising the steps of:

abutting a positioning member with respect to a pivotally rotated image carrier along a predetermined direction so as to depress the image carrier;

depressing the image carrier via a center shaft of the image carrier in predetermined weight along a direction opposite to the predetermined direction; and

stably holding the image carrier based upon both the depression made along the predetermined direction and the depression made along the direction opposite to the predetermined direction.

27. (Original) The image carrier holding method according to claim 26, wherein

the depression along the predetermined direction is realized by abutting with respect to the image carrier from a circumferential portion of the image carrier in a wrap shape within a predetermined range so as to depress the image carrier.

28. (Original) The image carrier holding method according to claim 27, wherein
the opposite direction corresponds to such a direction along which the depression is made
from the circumferential portion toward the center shaft within a range at the circumferential
portion of the image carrier, which is formed by an extension of such a straight line passing
through the abutting range in the wrap shape and the center shaft.